

A Treasure From the South Sea

By Howard Fielding, Copyright, 1905, by Charles W. Hooks.

"MR. TERRY would like to see you, sir," said the office boy, and then, perceiving that the name conveyed no meaning to his chief, he added: "Tinker Terry. That's what he says. Tell Mr. Austin it's the 'Tinker.'"

Austin blinked at the boy with the manner of one who is waking from a dream, and, in fact, he had been recalled from thoughts scarce nearer to reality than dreamland.

"Tinker Terry is dead," said he slowly. "He was drowned two years ago last April in the middle of the Pacific ocean."

"He looks it, sir," responded the boy, with a timid grin. "Send him in," said Austin.

Presently there appeared at the door of the private office a man who had indeed been drowned. Fathoms deep had he gone down amid the whirlpools of this world, and the expiring billows had sung in his ears.

He was short of stature and of a starved leanness; his worn, shiny black clothes hung in folds and drooped as if they were wet; a weather beaten hat was in his hand, and the hair of his head was sleek on top, like a swimmer's, falling over his ears in streaks of black and gray, though the man was under thirty.

He closed the door hastily behind him and, without waiting for a welcome, drew a chair up to Austin's desk and began to pour forth a wild "Odyssey" of the south seas. He had a fiery gift of narrative style, and Austin's natural dread of what are called "hard luck stories" vanished in the inside of one minute. His interest took hold upon the tale; he followed it with eagerness, even with envy, for there lurked in him a great unsatisfied appetite for adventure.

"But what was the object of all this?" he demanded when Terry paused. "What the deuce were you after out there? Why were you so anxious to reach this island of—what do you call it?"

"Halenui," said Terry. "That's its name. And now I'll show you what I was after."

He drew from his pocket a little metal box which had once contained wax matches, but was now full of irregular fragments of a yellowish white substance like the dried root of some plant.

"This is my treasure," said he. "I faced fifty deaths to get it, and, by jingo, I succeeded. There's a ton of it stored in San Francisco in my name."

"A ton of it?" gasped Austin.

"Oh, I can get as much more as we need," said Terry. "I've made all the arrangements."

"But what's it for? What can you do with it?"

Terry nervously selected a bit of the root and put it into his mouth, and



"THIS IS MY TREASURE"

throughout, the subsequent conversation he chewed it as if it were his soul's sustenance. But he did not delay to answer Austin's question. Between them on the leaf of the desk he laid a book which had once been a handsome product of the printer's art, but was now battered and torn and shrunken with many wettings. Austin recognized it for a volume of south sea sketches by an author so illustrious that his name must be suppressed in this affair. Terry opened the book at a place where a leaf was folded and pointed to a passage that ran as follows:

"It is not in the nature of this world's governance that an isle should be so blessed as Halenui above all its fellows and not have an appropriate curse to balance the account. This little land of plenty in the barren sea is no safe residence for strangers. It is the ancestral home and present headquarters of the plague of rheumatism, and, though you shall have found yourself immune in every other corner of the earth, here the invisible rack of torture waits for you, and within one week you shall be stretched upon it howling. The natives indeed protect themselves by the use of a simple root which grows in vast abundance somewhere in the interior. Its secret is preserved from visitors and from resident

writes as well. These must buy from the chief, whose charge is moderate, considering the possibilities of extortion which lie in such a monopoly. As for the virtues of the remedy I can testify from personal experience. An hour suffices for the cure, and a handful of the root will guarantee immunity from pain for many weeks. The natives call it kanitu, a coined word replacing an older name, now out of use."

"Terry had been following Austin's eyes from line to line of the paragraph, and at the precise moment when the end was reached he cried:

"What do you think of that? Did you ever hear of such an indorsement? How has this jewel lain so long buried? Man, do you realize the worth of it?"

Austin closed the book and for some seconds contemplated the author's name, half effaced, upon the cover.

"I love this man like a brother," said he, "yet he was no physician."

"Physician be hanged!" exclaimed Terry impatiently. "I'd rather have the patient's word than the doctor's any day. He says he was cured. That's what the public wants to know."

"Do you mean to say that you're going to try to put this stuff on the market?"

"Am I?" rejoined Terry in a sort of subdued shriek as he sprang to his feet. "Man, do you fancy that I like to be poor? Is this my taste in the matter of attire? Ha, ha! And, besides," he added, with a change of tone pathetic and absurd—"besides, I am in love."

Austin drew a deep breath and seemed about to say something serious. Then he checked the utterance and began to laugh silently and with increasing enjoyment. Terry sat down, but was too nervous to sit still.

"What's the joke?" he demanded when he could restrain himself no longer.

"I'm in love, too," responded Austin. "And her father has the rheumatism. Marvelous coincidence!"

Terry's eyes blazed.

"You give him some of this," said he. "If the man has any gratitude—"

"It's not a question of gratitude," interrupted Austin. "It's a matter of propriety. My pecuniary situation does not warrant me in falling in love with a young lady who has been favored with all the advantages of wealth. I am generally supposed to be a sharer in this fairly prosperous business, but the fact is that I am only the salaried manager on a yearly contract. I haven't \$10,000 of my own in the world; so there's the end of it."

"You put your \$10,000 into kanitu," said Terry, with dire earnestness, "and you'll have a fortune within two years."

He supported this assertion with the most moving arguments, but Austin was obdurate. He would not risk his \$10,000 on kanitu, nor would he consent to experiment with that remedy in the case of the gentleman whom he dreamed of calling father-in-law. This latter refusal Terry seemed to take harder than the other, and he said it was downright heartless of Austin to deprive a sufferer of his only earthly hope.

"Just tell me who he is and give me his address," pleaded Terry. "And I'll make a new man of him."

"Not for gold and precious stones," said Austin. And at this Terry abruptly took his leave after heroically declining a loan of money.

In the evening of the second day thereafter Austin called at the home of the queen of his heart and upon being shown into the drawing room found himself alone with her father, Mr. Douglass Harland, who was pacing the floor and chewing as if for a wager.

"How are you, Austin?" he cried, with amazing cordiality. "Glad to see you. How's your friend, Mr. Terry?"

Austin paused, speechless, and his gaze was so intent upon Harland's jaw that it sufficed for a question.

"Yes; that's it," said Harland—"kanitu. By George, sir, this stuff is heaven's best gift to man!"

"You don't really believe that it's done you any good?"

"Believe!" cried Harland, and he tossed his arms high. "If I'd done that yesterday morning," he added, "the pain would have killed me. My dear fellow, I'm going to chew this stuff all the time. I'm going to learn to chew it in my sleep. You did me a good turn when you sent Terry to my office. Ha!"

"When I did what?"

"He's a bright fellow in his way," continued Harland, not noting the interruption. "He's got a good thing, and he knows how to push it. Of course I understand your position. Terry said that you couldn't go in deeper than \$10,000 and that you didn't think it was enough. Your view of the matter, as Terry disclosed it to me, showed sound business sense. It gave me a very favorable impression of your judgment. As you told him, the game ought to be pushed hard at the start."

"I never authorized Terry—"

"Certainly not," said Harland hastily. "You never authorized him to tell me all this, but you know the man. He's honest and simple hearted as a child. He just babbled the whole story right out. He said that you saw the merit of the thing as clear as possible and that it was wholly a question of capital with you."

"But I didn't say—"

"Wait," said Harland, with an appropriate gesture which seemed to give him positive delight because it

gave him the floor, for I've got only one minute. Mrs. Harland and I are going out, and the carriage is at the door. This is what I want to say: Of course this kanitu business isn't big enough for me to give it my personal attention, but if you want to drop in your little ten thousand and run the thing I'll put up the balance of the capital, whatever we may figure out that it ought to be. We'll talk that over tomorrow. Goodby for the present."

And he shook hands vigorously and skipped away as lightly as a boy. Austin remained in a dazed condition, from which he was unable to emerge even in the presence of Celia Harland.

In his apartments, however, and under the calming influence of good tobacco he was able to analyze the situation, and he beheld it in three branches:

First.—Terry is the son of the father of lies, but he meant to do me a kindness. Shall I betray him and wreck his hopes?

Second.—Mr. Harland has been stricken with the fortunate delusion that I



HE CAUGHT TERRY BY THE SHOULDERS.

am a good business man—the only kind of man he likes or understands. If I tell him the facts and reject this scheme he will think I am a donkey. Can I risk that?

Third.—Mr. Harland has looked into this game, and he believes that it will win. His opinion is worth two of mine. To go into this with him and prove my ability under his eyes and drive this enterprise to success is the short road to heaven on earth for me. Shall I ever have such another chance?

No one will be in doubt about the decision which Austin made from the facts of the case as stated under those three headings. Within a week the partnership was formed, the money banked, the game begun. Within a month there were indications of success. Terry's advertising matter had begun to appear and to excite phenomenal interest. Within a year a flourishing business had been built up. And one evening in his bachelor quarters Austin announced his engagement and accepted the cordial congratulations of his friend Terry, now changed almost beyond recognition and clothed to the edge of fashion.

"I tell you, my son," said Terry, "there's no limit to a brave man's hopes in this big world. 'Nil desperandum'—there's the only motto. And if any man has a right to bear it I have. You've never realized, you've never understood, what I went through. Two years—two years, by jingo—I struggled to reach that rascally island and never saw it. No, sir; I was never within 500 miles of it."

"Never?"

"Certainly not. At the end of all that cruising I landed in San Francisco with only a sailor's wages in my pocket and my hopes no nearer than they had been at the start. What did I do? Despair? Not much! I could not get this confounded kanitu. Very well, I said to myself that I would not be beaten. I made the stuff."

"Made it?"

"Yes, sir. Listen to me. Ten years ago there'd been a great rheumatism cure on the market, but it failed because the proprietors didn't know how to advertise. Now, I knew how to advertise, but I hadn't any cure. Very good. I raised a hundred dollars—beggot it—and bought the formula of Hawkins' Old Home Remedy, the best thing that ever was. I experimented with a kind of snakeroot and discovered that a little stick of it the size of a cigarette would soak up near a tablespoonful of the Old Home Remedy and that the stuff worked better taken that way than out of the spoon. By jingo, it knocked rheumatism silly!"

Austin strode across the room and caught Terry by the shoulder with a grip that nearly broke his bones.

"Do you mean to tell me that I have benked both the public and Douglass Harland?"

"Bunked!" cried Terry. "Why, man, you're a public benefactor. From first to last, have we heard of a single case where our remedy has failed? No, sir, we haven't."

"But, Mr. Harland? How can I tell him? I have cheated him. I have stolen his daughter. I—"

"My dear fellow, Mr. Harland knows all about it—has known from the start. I had to tell him or he wouldn't come in. 'If you've got to depend upon a cannibal chief for these goods,' said he in our first interview, 'you'll get stuck. Your supply is beyond your control. It's a fatal weakness.' Then

I told him the truth. That's all right," said he, "but don't mention it to Austin. He's got one of those New England consciences. They don't prevent men from going into games like this, but they make them uncomfortable. He'll do better work if he doesn't know.' So I've kept mum."

He drew himself up to his full height of five feet four inches and tapped himself proudly upon the bosom of his immaculate dress shirt. Austin sank into a chair, covered his face with his hands and laughed.

This is the kind of a Story for which the NATIONAL MAGAZINE is paying \$10,000

TOO DIFFICULT
In a Pennsylvania town where the friends of a prize old Quaker gathered one day attended the marriage of her granddaughter, a young person who had in the course of his twenty-one years received much needed discipline at her hands.

The old lady was at her best on this festive occasion, and at a paper in the wedding-breakfast her niece's radiant looked over at her with a beguiling smile.
"Tell us why they never married, Aunt Phyllis?" he said, teasingly.
"That is soon told," replied the old Quakeress, calmly. "It was because I was not as easy pleased as thy wife was."

Do you know of a better one

We want little stories, anecdotes, bits of verse—any clipping from a newspaper, magazine or book that has made you think, laugh or cry

Prizes will be given for the best selections. Ten piles of silver dollars as high as the first ten successful competitors are the first awards.

The only condition for entering this competition is that you send with your clipping \$1.00 for a six months' trial subscription to the National Magazine. Address,

JOE CHAPPLE, Editor

946 DORCHESTER AVENUE, Boston, Mass.

Our Great Removal Sale of High Grade Wall Paper Is a Phenomenal Success.

Now is the best opportunity to secure bargains as we will move to our new location January 1st, and in the meanwhile we are selling wall paper at prices lower than you have ever seen it before. Call and inspect our elegant lines.

B. F. Allen & Son, 365-367 Commercial St.

Your Prescription: Rock Island

If you are going East, I would appreciate your consulting me. I will gladly help you plan your trip and tell you all about Rock Island service. Just drop me a line—consultation free!

I will show you a Rock Island folder and our publication entitled "Across the Continent in a Tourist Sleeping Car." It is of considerable importance that you select the right route—there are many different ways to go. I'll tell you of the superior points about the Rock Island way.

Rock Island System

A. H. McDONALD, General Agent, Rock Island System, 140 Third Street, Portland, Ore.

The MORNING ASTORIAN 75 CTS. PER MONTH Astoria's Best Newspaper

JUST A MOMENT!

We Want to Talk to You

ABOUT BOOK BINDING

We do it in All the Latest and Best Styles of the Art. . . .

We take your Old Magazines that you have piled away on your shelves and make Handsome Books of them fit to grace any library.

We take your old worn out books with the covers torn off, rebind them and return to you good as any new book.

Let us figure with you on fixing up your Library.

The J. S. Dellinger Co.,

Makers of All Kinds of Books

ASTORIAN BUILDING CORNER COMMERCIAL AND 10TH STREET